

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A system for sorting search results according to a buyer profile during the matching phase of an electronic commerce transaction, comprising:

a database containing a buyer profile associated with a buyer, the buyer profile comprising a record of the number of times each of a plurality of seller-oriented sort criteria has appeared in at least some previous events involving the buyer, each of the plurality of seller-oriented sort criteria in the buyer profile associated with at least one seller attribute; and

a server operable to:

receive a plurality of search results communicated from one or more seller databases in response to an under-constrained search query in which exact seller attribute values are not specified for one or more seller attributes;

access the buyer profile to determine an order of display based on the number of times one or more of the plurality of seller-oriented sort criteria in the buyer profile applicable to the search results have appeared in the previous events involving the buyer;

sort the search results according to the determined order of display; and  
communicate the sorted search results to the buyer.

2. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 10 ~~Claim 1~~, wherein an attribute value is selected from the group consisting of a product attribute value and a seller attribute value.

3. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 10 ~~Claim 1~~, wherein a sort criterion is selected from the group consisting of a product attribute, a product attribute value, a seller attribute, and a seller attribute value.

4. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 10 ~~Claim 1~~, wherein an event is selected from the group consisting of a search query, a sort request, and a search result selection.

5. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 10 ~~Claim 1~~, wherein the server is operable to determine the order of display according to the number of times each of a plurality of attribute values has appeared in events involving the buyer.

6. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 10 ~~Claim 1~~, wherein the server is operable to determine the order of display according to the number of times each of a plurality of attributes has appeared in events involving the buyer.

7. (Currently Amended) A system for sorting search results according to a buyer profile during the matching phase of an electronic commerce transaction, comprising:

a database containing a buyer profile associated with a buyer, the buyer profile comprising a record of the number of times each of a plurality of sort criteria has appeared in at least some previous events involving the buyer; and

a server operable to:

receive a plurality of search results communicated from one or more seller databases in response to an under-constrained search query in which exact attribute values are not specified for one or more attributes;

access the buyer profile to determine an order of display based on the number of times one or more sort criteria in the buyer profile applicable to the search results have appeared in the previous events involving the buyer;

sort the search results according to the determined order of display; and

communicate the sorted search results to the buyer;

~~The system of Claim 1~~, wherein the server is operable to determine the order of display according to the number of times a leading attribute value for each of a plurality of attributes has appeared in events involving the buyer, a leading attribute value for an attribute being the attribute value appearing more often than any other attribute value for the attribute.

8. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 10 ~~Claim 1~~, wherein the buyer profile comprises a record of the number of times each of a plurality of sort criteria has appeared in a specified number of recent events involving the buyer.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) A system for sorting search results according to a buyer profile during the matching phase of an electronic commerce transaction, comprising:

a database containing a buyer profile associated with a buyer, the buyer profile comprising a record of the number of times each of a plurality of sort criteria has appeared in at least some previous events involving the buyer; and

a server operable to:

receive a plurality of search results communicated from one or more seller databases in response to an under-constrained search query in which exact attribute values are not specified for one or more attributes;

access the buyer profile to determine an order of display based on the number of times one or more sort criteria in the buyer profile applicable to the search results have appeared in the previous events involving the buyer;

sort the search results according to the determined order of display; and

communicate the sorted search results to the buyer;

the server further operable to:

delete a record for a sort criterion from the buyer profile if the sort criterion has not appeared within a predetermined period of time or within a specified number of recent events;

~~The system of Claim 9, wherein the server is further operable to:~~

~~notify the buyer before deleting the sort criterion; and~~

~~not delete the sort criterion if the buyer indicates the sort criterion should not be deleted.~~

11. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 10 ~~Claim 1~~, wherein the search query is under-constrained in that no attribute values are specified for one or more attributes.

12. (Currently Amended) A method of sorting search results according to a buyer profile during the matching phase of an electronic commerce transaction, comprising:

receiving a plurality of search results communicated from one or more seller databases in response to an under-constrained search query in which exact seller attribute values are not specified for one or more seller attributes;

accessing a buyer profile associated with a buyer, the buyer profile comprising a record of the number of times each of a plurality of seller-oriented sort criteria has appeared in at least some previous events involving the buyer, each of the plurality of seller-oriented sort criteria in the buyer profile associated with at least one seller attribute;

determining an order of display based on the number of times one or more of the plurality of seller-oriented sort criteria in the buyer profile applicable to the search results have appeared in the previous events involving the buyer;

sorting the search results according to the determined order of display; and

communicating the sorted search results to the buyer.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 21 ~~Claim 12~~, wherein an attribute value is selected from the group consisting of a product attribute value and a seller attribute value.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 21 ~~Claim 12~~, wherein a sort criterion is selected from the group consisting of a product attribute, a product attribute value, a seller attribute, and a seller attribute value.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 21 ~~Claim 12~~, wherein an event is selected from the group consisting of a search query, a sort request, and a search result selection.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 21 ~~Claim 12~~, wherein the determined order of display is based on the number of times each of a plurality of attribute values has appeared in events involving the buyer.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 21 ~~Claim 12~~, wherein the determined order of display is based on the number of times each of a plurality of attributes has appeared in events involving the buyer.

18. (Currently Amended) A method of sorting search results according to a buyer profile during the matching phase of an electronic commerce transaction, comprising:

receiving a plurality of search results communicated from one or more seller databases in response to an under-constrained search query in which exact attribute values are not specified for one or more attributes;

accessing a buyer profile associated with a buyer, the buyer profile comprising a record of the number of times each of a plurality of sort criteria has appeared in at least some previous events involving the buyer;

determining an order of display based on the number of times one or more sort criteria in the buyer profile applicable to the search results have appeared in the previous events involving the buyer;

sorting the search results according to the determined order of display; and

communicating the sorted search results to the buyer;

~~The method of Claim 12, wherein~~ the determined order of display is based on the number of times a leading attribute value for each of a plurality of attributes has appeared in events involving the buyer, a leading attribute value for an attribute being the attribute value appearing more often than any other attribute value for the attribute.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 21 ~~Claim 12~~, wherein the buyer profile comprises a record of the number of times each of a plurality of sort criteria has appeared in a specified number of recent events involving the buyer.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 21 ~~Claim 12~~, further comprising deleting a record for a sort criterion from the buyer profile if the sort criterion has not appeared within a predetermined period of time or within a specified number of recent events.

21. (Currently Amended) A method of sorting search results according to a buyer profile during the matching phase of an electronic commerce transaction, comprising:

receiving a plurality of search results communicated from one or more seller databases in response to an under-constrained search query in which exact attribute values are not specified for one or more attributes;

accessing a buyer profile associated with a buyer, the buyer profile comprising a record of the number of times each of a plurality of sort criteria has appeared in at least some previous events involving the buyer;

determining an order of display based on the number of times one or more sort criteria in the buyer profile applicable to the search results have appeared in the previous events involving the buyer;

sorting the search results according to the determined order of display;

communicating the sorted search results to the buyer;

~~The method of Claim 12, further comprising:~~

determining that a sort criterion has not appeared within a predetermined period of time or within a specified number of recent events;

notifying the buyer that the record for the sort criterion may be deleted;

deleting the sort criterion if the buyer indicates the sort criterion be deleted; and

not deleting the sort criterion if the buyer indicates the sort criterion should not be deleted.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 21 ~~Claim 12~~, wherein the search query is under-constrained in that no attribute values are specified for one or more attributes.

23. (Currently Amended) Software for sorting search results according to a buyer profile during the matching phase of an electronic commerce transaction, the software embodied in a computer-readable medium and when executed operable to:

receive a plurality of search results communicated from one or more seller databases in response to an under-constrained search query in which exact seller attribute values are not specified for one or more seller attributes;

access a buyer profile associated with a buyer, the buyer profile comprising a record of the number of times each of a plurality of seller-oriented sort criteria has appeared in at least some previous events involving the buyer, each of the plurality of seller-oriented sort criteria in the buyer profile associated with at least one seller attribute;

determine an order of display based on the number of times one or more of the plurality of seller-oriented sort criteria in the buyer profile applicable to the search results have appeared in the previous events involving the buyer;

sort the search results according to the determined order of display; and

communicate the sorted search results to the buyer.

24. (Currently Amended) The software of Claim 32 ~~Claim 23~~, wherein an attribute value is selected from the group consisting of a product attribute value and a seller attribute value.

25. (Currently Amended) The software of Claim 32 ~~Claim 23~~, wherein a sort criterion is selected from the group consisting of a product attribute, a product attribute value, a seller attribute, and a seller attribute value.

26. (Currently Amended) The software of Claim 32 ~~Claim 23~~, wherein an event is selected from the group consisting of a search query, a sort request, and a search result selection.

27. (Currently Amended) The software of Claim 32 ~~Claim 23~~, wherein the determined order of display is based on the number of times each of a plurality of attribute values has appeared in events involving the buyer.

28. ((Currently Amended) The software of Claim 32 ~~Claim 23~~, wherein the determined order of display is based on the number of times each of a plurality of attributes has appeared in events involving the buyer.

29. (Currently Amended) Software for sorting search results according to a buyer profile during the matching phase of an electronic commerce transaction, the software embodied in a computer-readable medium and when executed operable to:

receive a plurality of search results communicated from one or more seller databases in response to an under-constrained search query in which exact attribute values are not specified for one or more attributes;

access a buyer profile associated with a buyer, the buyer profile comprising a record of the number of times each of a plurality of sort criteria has appeared in at least some previous events involving the buyer;

determine an order of display based on the number of times one or more sort criteria in the buyer profile applicable to the search results have appeared in the previous events involving the buyer;

sort the search results according to the determined order of display; and

communicate the sorted search results to the buyer;

~~The software of Claim 23, wherein~~ the determined order of display is based on the number of times a leading attribute value for each of a plurality of attributes has appeared in events involving the buyer, a leading attribute value for an attribute being the attribute value appearing more often than any other attribute value for the attribute.

30. (Currently Amended) The software of Claim 32 ~~Claim 23~~, wherein the buyer profile comprises a record of the number of times each of a plurality of sort criteria has appeared in a specified number of recent events involving the buyer.

31. (Currently Amended) The software of Claim 32 ~~Claim 23~~, further operable to delete the record for the sort criterion from the buyer profile if the sort criterion has not appeared within a predetermined period of time or within a specified number of recent events.



32. (Currently Amended) Software for sorting search results according to a buyer profile during the matching phase of an electronic commerce transaction, the software embodied in a computer-readable medium and when executed operable to:

receive a plurality of search results communicated from one or more seller databases in response to an under-constrained search query in which exact attribute values are not specified for one or more attributes;

access a buyer profile associated with a buyer, the buyer profile comprising a record of the number of times each of a plurality of sort criteria has appeared in at least some previous events involving the buyer;

determine an order of display based on the number of times one or more sort criteria in the buyer profile applicable to the search results have appeared in the previous events involving the buyer;

sort the search results according to the determined order of display;

communicate the sorted search results to the buyer;

~~The software of Claim 23, further operable to:~~

notify the buyer before deleting the sort criterion; and

not delete the sort criterion if the buyer indicates the sort criterion should not be deleted.

33. (Currently Amended) The software of Claim 32 ~~Claim 23~~, wherein the search query is under-constrained in that no attribute values are specified for one or more attributes.

34. (Currently Amended) A system for sorting search results according to a buyer profile during the matching phase of an electronic commerce transaction, comprising:

a database containing a buyer profile associated with a buyer, the buyer profile comprising a record of the number of times each of a plurality of seller attribute values has been specified in at least some previous search queries received from the buyer, ~~each attribute value being a product attribute value or a seller attribute value~~; and

a server operable to:

receive a plurality of search results communicated from one or more seller databases in response to an under-constrained search query in which exact seller attribute values are not specified for one or more seller attributes;

access the buyer profile to determine an order of display of the search results based on the number of times one or more of the seller attribute values in the buyer profile that correspond to the seller attribute values left unspecified in the search query have been specified in the previous search queries received from the buyer, such that a first search result comprising a first seller attribute value that has been specified in a first number of previous search queries received from the buyer will be displayed within an ordered list ahead of a second search result comprising a second seller attribute value that has been specified in a second number of previous search queries received from the buyer if the first number is greater than the second number;

sort the search results according to the determined order of display; and

communicate the sorted search results to the buyer.

35. (Currently Amended) A method of sorting search results according to a buyer profile during the matching phase of an electronic commerce transaction, comprising:

receiving a plurality of search results communicated from one or more seller databases ~~in response to a~~ in response to an under-constrained search query in which exact seller attribute values are not specified for one or more seller attributes;

accessing a buyer profile associated with a buyer, the buyer profile comprising a record of the number of times each of a plurality of seller attribute values has been specified in at least some previous search queries received from the buyer, ~~each attribute value being a product attribute value or a seller attribute value~~;

determining an order of display of the search results based on the number of times one or more of the seller attribute values in the buyer profile that correspond to the seller attribute values left unspecified in the search query have been specified in the previous search queries received from the buyer, such that a first search result comprising a first seller attribute value that has been specified in a first number of previous search queries received from the buyer will be displayed within an ordered list ahead of a second search result comprising a second seller attribute value that has been specified in a second number of previous search queries received from the buyer if the first number is greater than the second number;

sorting the search results according to the determined order of display; and  
communicating the sorted search results to the buyer.

36. (Currently Amended) Software for sorting search results according to a buyer profile during the matching phase of an electronic commerce transaction, the software embodied in a computer-readable medium and when executed operable to:

receive a plurality of search results communicated from one or more seller databases ~~in response to a~~ in response to an under-constrained search query in which exact seller attribute values are not specified for one or more seller attributes;

access a buyer profile associated with a buyer, the buyer profile comprising a record of the number of times each of a plurality of seller attribute values has been specified in at least some previous search queries received from the buyer, ~~each attribute value being a product attribute value or a seller attribute value;~~

determine an order of display of the search results based on the number of times one or more of the seller attribute values in the buyer profile that correspond to the seller attribute values left unspecified in the search query have been specified in the previous search queries received from the buyer, such that a first search result comprising a first seller attribute value that has been specified in a first number of previous search queries received from the buyer will be displayed within an ordered list ahead of a second search result comprising a second seller attribute value that has been specified in a second number of previous search queries received from the buyer if the first number is greater than the second number;

sort the search results according to the determined order of display; and

communicate the sorted search results to the buyer.

37. (New) The system of Claim 1, wherein at least one seller attribute comprises a physical location of a seller.

38. (New) The system of Claim 1, wherein at least one seller attribute comprises a type of currency accepted by a seller.

39. (New) The system of Claim 1, wherein:  
the buyer profile further comprises a record of the number of times each of a plurality of product-oriented sort criteria has appeared in at least some previous events involving the buyer, each of the plurality of product-oriented sort criteria in the buyer profile associated with at least one product attribute; and

the server is operable to determine the order of display further based on the number of times one or more of the plurality of product-oriented sort criteria in the buyer profile applicable to the search results have appeared in the previous events involving the buyer.

40. (New) The system of Claim 1, wherein an event is selected from the group consisting of a search query, a sort request, and a search result selection.

41. (New) The system of Claim 7, wherein an event is selected from the group consisting of a search query, a sort request, and a search result selection.

42. (New) The method of Claim 12, wherein at least one seller attribute comprises a physical location of a seller.

43. (New) The method of Claim 12, wherein at least one seller attribute comprises a type of currency accepted by a seller.

44. (New) The method of Claim 12, wherein:  
the buyer profile further comprises a record of the number of times each of a plurality of product-oriented sort criteria has appeared in at least some previous events involving the buyer, each of the plurality of product-oriented sort criteria in the buyer profile associated with at least one product attribute; and

the order of display is determined further based on the number of times one or more of the plurality of product-oriented sort criteria in the buyer profile applicable to the search results have appeared in the previous events involving the buyer.

45. (New) The system of Claim 12, wherein an event is selected from the group consisting of a search query, a sort request, and a search result selection.

46. (New) The system of Claim 18, wherein an event is selected from the group consisting of a search query, a sort request, and a search result selection.

47. (New) The software of Claim 23, wherein at least one seller attribute comprises a physical location of a seller.

48. (New) The software of Claim 23, wherein at least one seller attribute comprises a type of currency accepted by a seller.

49. (New) The software of Claim 23, wherein:  
the buyer profile further comprises a record of the number of times each of a plurality of product-oriented sort criteria has appeared in at least some previous events involving the buyer, each of the plurality of product-oriented sort criteria in the buyer profile associated with at least one product attribute; and

the software is operable to determine the order of display further based on the number of times one or more of the plurality of product-oriented sort criteria in the buyer profile applicable to the search results have appeared in the previous events involving the buyer.

50. (New) The system of Claim 23, wherein an event is selected from the group consisting of a search query, a sort request, and a search result selection.

51. (New) The system of Claim 29, wherein an event is selected from the group consisting of a search query, a sort request, and a search result selection.